Overview of State Teacher Fellows Program in Kentucky

Recruitment

The Hope Street Group Team (HSG) undertook specific due diligence prior to formalizing its engagement with the Commonwealth of Kentucky including attendance at Kentucky's Teacher Effectiveness Steering Committee and meetings with:

- Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Commissioner Terry Holliday and Associate Commissioner Felicia Cummings-Smith,
- Kentucky Education Association (KEA) Executive Director Mary Ann Blankenship and KEA's elected President Stephanie Winkler,
- Governor Beshear's Education Policy Advisor, Ashley Parrot
- Kentucky State Board of Education member Roger Marchum,
- Kentucky State Chamber of Commerce Education Liaison Diana Taylor; and
- Prichard Committee Executive Director Stu Silberman and Associate Executive Director Cindy Heine

After HSG completed its due diligence, HSG and KDE began recruiting State Teacher Fellows (STFs) in April 2013. The recruitment strategies consisted of a joint press release from the KDE and an email from Commissioner Holliday to all teachers in the Commonwealth of Kentucky encouraging teachers to apply for the program. Additionally, HSG contacted district superintendents in Kentucky to notify them of the opportunity. HSG also held open question and answer teleconferences for district superintendents. Superintendents were asked to disseminate information about how teachers could apply for the program. 2013 HSG National Teacher Fellow (NTF), Allison Hunt from Jefferson County, also shared the application with teachers in her district along with a personal note to share about her experience with the organization. In total, 126 teachers from 56 districts applied for the Fellowship via HSG's online application. Applicants were required to submit three narrative responses and include a letter of support for participation in the program from their school administrator along with background information and a resume.

Selection

During the applicant review process, HSG staff and 2013 NTFs reviewed each application using a detailed rubric. Each application was reviewed by no fewer than three people. Each reviewer used the rubric to evaluate each applicant's application. The first round of the applicant review process yielded 33 semi-finalists. Semi-finalists were chosen based on their leadership skills, communications skills, their positive attitudes about change, and the level of support from their district. Semi-finalists were interviewed by phone by the Deputy Director of Teacher Engagement and the 2013 NTF from Kentucky. HSG staff used a different rubric to score the responses to phone interview questions. After the phone interviews were complete, 21 fellows were chosen. Consistent with the core principles of the program, the STFs selected are representative of the demographics of the Kentucky teaching population. STFs represent a wide-array of diversity in terms of geographical location in the state, age, experience, ethnicity, subject matter, and grade level taught.

Kentucky's State Teacher Fellows

- Lea Ann Atherton, McCracken County School District
- Angela Baker, Berea County Independent School District
- Randy Barrette, Menifee County School District
- Erin Brummett, Lincoln County School District
- Jana Bryant, Daviess County School District
- Lindsey Childers, Trigg County School District
- Brad Clark, Woodford County School District
- Tabetha Cooksey, Cumberland County School District
- Kim Delaney, Boone County School District
- Paradise Forbes, Williamstown County Independent School District
- Joe Harris, Lawrence County School District
- Michelle Hendricks, Bullitt County School District
- Christine Holajter Mason County School District
- Kipp Hottman, Oldham County School District
- Tanya Jury, Bardstown County Independent School District
- Natalie McCutchen, Simpson County School District
- Melissa Plank, Fleming County School District
- Pennye Rogers, Todd County School District
- Jennie Watkins, Corbin County Independent School District
- Sarah Yost, Jefferson County School District

Training Overview

Kentucky STFs traveled to Louisville on June 18, 2013 for orientation training. The training included an overview of HSG as an organization, as well as information about the fellowship program and what would be expected of them. STFs participated in communications training facilitated by a professional Kentucky communications firm, *Wiser Strategies*. The training focused on best practices for messaging, interviewing, and writing op-eds.

STFs have subsequently participated in two additional in-person trainings. In July 2013, HSG's 2013 NTFs came to Kentucky to lead the training. STFs learned about best practices for communicating and building relationships with policymakers. They also received an overview from a statistician from Education Testing Service (ETS) on collecting data. They also learned about leveraging and creating local teacher networks. The Kentucky Core Academic Standards were also reviewed. The executive director of the National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY) did a presentation on how STFs can use their experience to elevate the profession of teaching.

In November of 2013, the STFS participated in a one-day meeting in Lexington, Kentucky to discuss the challenges they had encountered as well as their progress to date. This training, led by the STFs, focused on strategies for working with teachers to encourage their participation in Professional Learning Networks (PLN). KDE Associate Commissioner Felicia Cummings-Smith and KEA Executive Director Mary Ann Blankenship participated in the convening as well. Felicia Cummings-Smith shared with the STFs how the Kentucky Department of Education plans to use the data STFs collect. Mary Ann Blankenship gave a historical review of the process used to bring about the changes in the state's Performance Growth and Evaluation System (PGES) for educators.

STFs have also participated in three online trainings on: virtual teacher engagement strategies, the use of social media, and how to collaborate with teacher associations. STFSs also have regular monthly conference calls to share strategies and discuss the challenges they encounter.

Trainings will be offered to STFs in 2014 as well. Trainings will focus on leading focus groups around two major topics: non-tested grades and subjects and best practices for implementing the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES).

Kentucky Teacher Engagement
STFs develop PLN to engage with over the term of their service. Training and ongoing professional support is provided to STFs to help them initiative, develop, and increase the size of their PLN. To date, 1883 teachers are part of a PLN in Kentucky. Plans are underway to continue to provide support to STFs to help them increase the number of peers in their PLN in 2014. HSG has a goal of engaging no less than 10 percent of all Kentucky teachers in the fellows' PLN. To date, HSG can report that 7 percent of teachers in Kentucky are engaged. We expect to reach 10 percent by February 2014.

Active PLN are essential to data collection efforts led by STFs because teachers have credibility among and trust with their peers. As such, STFs are able to gather candid feedback that teachers may not otherwise share with administrators at the building, district, and state levels. To develop PLN, STFs are advised to look at their existing networks and determine how best to engage the teachers with whom they already have a relationship. To date, STFs have worked within their schools and districts to build their PLN. They have also extended their reach across the Commonwealth through groups such as the Kentucky World Languages Association and #KYEDCHAT. In an effort to diversify our messaging efforts, HSG has engaged in polling and discussions with teachers at: the Kentucky State Fair, the TALK Conference, and on Twitter. HSG has also taken advantage of the opportunity to engage additional teachers while supporting state partners at events such as: the Summit on Early Childhood Literacy, Connected Educator Month, and the Prichard Committee gathering.

Data Collections

To date, STFs have facilitated two data collections both via Survey Monkey. Questions for the surveys were developed by ETS, a HSG partner. Before questions were sent to STFs to administer the surveys to their PLN, state partners reviewed the questions and shared edits that would best facilitate valuable feedback. After edits were made, STFs were sent a notice that a survey for their PLN was available for distribution.

STFs queried teachers on two primary topics for the first two surveys: the use of student surveys as part of PGES and the use of peer observations in PGES.

In addition to the surveys, 43 focus groups were held across the state and facilitated by STFs. The focus groups served as an opportunity to engage teachers in and outside of the PLN with the intention of collecting qualitative data. Teachers who attended the focus groups took a pre- and post-focus group survey via "Poll Everywhere" to ascertain the extent to which attendance at the focus group helped shape or shift their perceptions of the two topics.

While the collection of survey data is important to help inform decisions made by state partners, HSG recognizes that survey data are limited in their ability to test possible solutions to challenges and to engage teachers in problem-solving. STFs work with their PLN through the use of the focus groups and the Virtual Engagement Platform (VEP) to focus on suggestions for improvement of PGES. STFs are trained to encourage solutions-oriented dialogue with a focus on innovative thinking. HSG believes that because teachers have the strongest understanding of the complexities involved with implementing education reform, they are also the ideal source of possible solutions for many of the challenges that arise once implementation is underway.

The Virtual Engagement Platform (VEP) is hosted by HSG; however, STFs use it as an additional tool to engage their peers. The VEP provides a unique opportunity to collect qualitative data from teachers in the PLN who may be unable to attend in-person meetings and who want to contribute additional solutions-orientated feedback outside of the focus group.

First Survey
In the first survey, teachers in PLN were asked the following questions about peer observations.

Questions 1-12 allowed respondents to answer bi-modally with either: agree to some extent or disagree to some extent.

1. *Peer observation is a necessary process for improving student learning.*
2. *Peer observation is a necessary process for improving teaching.*
3. *Peer observation can be a powerful professional learning experience.*
4. *Peer observation can fit easily into the workday of my school.*
5. *I have confidence that my peers can provide specific feedback about my practice.*
6. *I have confidence that my peers can provide meaningful feedback about my practice.*
7. *Peer perspectives are generally more accurate than those of administrators.*
8. *Peer observation can serve as an opportunity to share best practices within my school.*
9. *Peer observation can serve as an opportunity to learn best practices within my school.*
10. *Peer observation helps move the profession towards a more collaborative environment.*
11. *Peer observation is an opportunity to serve as a teacher leader in my building.*
12. *It is critical that individuals receive training in order to be identified as a peer observer in the PGES.*

Questions 13 and 14 allowed respondents to respond with one of the following: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 or more.

13. *To best support my practice, at least _____ peer observers should observe my teaching annually.*

14. A peer observer should observe my teaching on at least _____ separate occasions per year to be able to best support my practice."

Question 15 allowed respondents to respond with one of the following:

- The extent to which they like me;
- The effectiveness of my teaching;
- My classroom management style;
- The amount of "fun" activities in my courses;
- My appearance;
- The extent to which my course affects my peer observer's course; and
- Their perception of the school administration's agenda.

15. Which of the following do you think peer observers will weigh most heavily in evaluating your teaching performance?

First Survey Results (1590 Teachers)

Table 1: Questions 1-12

Question	Agree to Some Extent	Disagree to Some Extent
1. Peer observation is a necessary process for improving student learning.	65.7%	34.3%
2. Peer observation is a necessary process for improving teaching.	67.8%	32.2%
3. Peer observation can be a powerful professional learning experience.	87.5%	12.5%
4. Peer observation can fit easily into the workday of my school.	36.8%	63.2%
5. I have confidence that my peers can provide specific feedback about my practice.	72.8%	27.2%
6. I have confidence that my peers can provide	74.6%	25.4%

	meaningful feedback about my practice.		
7.	Peer perspectives are generally more accurate than those of administrators.	65.3%	34.7%
8.	Peer observation can serve as an opportunity to share best practices within my school.	68.2%	31.8%
9.	Peer observation can serve as an opportunity to learn best practices within my school.	86.4%	13.6%
10.	Peer observation helps move the profession towards a more collaborative environment.	76.7%	23.3%
11.	Peer observation is an opportunity to serve as a teacher leader in my building.	75.1%	24.9%
12.	It is critical that individuals receive training in order to be identified as a peer observer in the PGES.	91.3%	8.7%

Table 2: Questions 13 & 14

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
13. To best support my practice, at least ___ peer observers should observe my teaching annually.	26%	45%	20%	5%	1%	3%
14. A peer observer should observe my teaching on at least ___ separate occasions per year to be able to best support my practice.	18.6%	44.8%	23.5%	7%	1.6%	4.2%

Table 3: Question 15

Response	% of Responses
The extent to which they like me.	12.2%
The effectiveness of my teaching.	46.3%
My classroom management style.	21.6%
The amount of "fun" activities in my courses.	1.7%
My appearance	0.1%
The extent to which my course affects my peer observer's course.	1.4%
Their perception of the school administration's agenda.	13.6%

Second Survey Results (1519 Teachers)

In the second survey, teachers were asked the following questions about the use of student surveys in PGES.

Questions 1-12 allowed respondents to answer bi-modally with either: agree to some extent or disagree to some extent.

1. *It is important to listen to what students say about their learning environments.*
2. *Students will give honest answers to questions about their learning experiences.*
3. *Listening to students and what they say is the norm at my school.*
4. *Acting on what students say is the norm at my school.*
5. *Students have unique knowledge about how I can improve my teaching practice.*
6. *Student surveys are a meaningful source of data within a formative assessment system.*
7. *Students will provide feedback based on how much they like a teacher.*
8. *Students will provide feedback based on the quality of the learning environment.*
9. *I am confident I can modify my practice based on what students say.*
10. *Improving education in my school requires equal participation and buy-in from students.*
11. *Improving education in my school requires equal participation and buy-in from teachers.*

12. *Improving education in my school requires equal participation and buy-in from school leaders.*

Questions 13 and 14 allowed respondents to respond bi-modally with "yes" or "no."

13. *Have you used student surveys in your classroom?*
14. *Have you seen examples of student surveys?*

Question 15 allowed respondents to respond with: Never, Rarely, Some, and Often.

15. *I have used student surveys in the past to refine my instruction.*

Question 16 allowed respondents to respond with one of the following:

- The amount they have learned in my courses;
- The extent to which they like me;
- The effectiveness of my teaching;
- Their grades in my course(s);
- The amount of "fun" activities in my course(s):
- The extent to which they consider me "strict" or "lenient";
- My level of enthusiasm in the course(s); and
- My appearance.

16. Which of the following do you think students will weigh most heavily in filling out the survey?

Second Survey Results (1590 Teachers)

Table 4: Questions 1-12

Question	Agree to Some Extent	Disagree to Some Extent
1. It is important to listen to what students say about their learning environments.	95%	5%
2. Students will give honest answers to questions about	67.3%	32.7%

their learning experiences.		
3. Listening to students and what they say is the norm at my school.	**74.1%**	**25.9%**
4. Acting on what students say is the norm at my school.	**60.3%**	**29.7%**
5. Students have unique knowledge about how I can improve my teaching practice.	**60.8%**	**29.2%**
6. Student surveys are a meaningful source of data within a formative assessment system.	**62.9%**	**37.1%**
7. Students will provide feedback based on how much they like a teacher.	**95%**	**5%**
8. Students will provide feedback based on the quality of the learning environment.	**61.6%**	**38.4%**
9. I am confident I can modify my practice based on what students say.	**75.9%**	**24.1%**
10. Improving education in my school requires equal participation and buy-in from students.	**90.9%**	**9.1%**
11. Improving education in my school requires equal participation and buy-in from teachers.	**98%**	**2%**
12. Improving education in my school requires equal participation and buy-in from school leaders.	**98.3%**	**1.7%**

Table 5: Questions 13 and 14

Question	YES	NO
13. Have you used student surveys in your classroom?	62.6%	37.4%
14. Have you seen examples of student surveys?	47.9%	52.1%

Table 6: Question 15

Question	Never	Rarely	Some	Often
15. I have used student surveys in the past to refine my instruction	4%	25%	60%	11%

Table 7: Question 16

Response	% of Responses
The amount they have learned in my course(s).	5%
The extent to which they like me.	43%
The effectiveness of my teaching.	8%
Their grades in my course(s).	8%
The amount of "fun" activities in my course(s).	21%
The extent to which they consider me "strict" or "lenient."	11%
My level of enthusiasm in the course(s).	4%
My appearance.	0%

Qualitative Data Analysis/Focus Group Results

HSG has also collected qualitative data. Qualitative data were collected from two different groups of respondents. The first group was made up of teachers from the STFs' PLN (all of the teachers in PLN were invited to attend). These teachers volunteered to attend a focus group. In total, there were 156 teachers in attendance at multiple focus groups around the state.

The second group of teachers also came from the STFs' PLN. These teachers responded online to a series of open-ended questions. HSG gathered 89 responses. The questions were as follows:

1. What role should student voice play in creating a positive learning environment?
2. How can you use student surveys to inform instruction?
3. What challenges do you see with using student surveys?
4. What characteristics do you expect from a peer observer?
5. What challenges do you see with peer observations?
6. What methods should be used for peer observers to promote real reflection for growth yet remain non-evaluative?
7. How can you use feedback from peer observers to improve your practice?

HSG worked with state partners, including KDE, KEA, and the Prichard Committee to create a PowerPoint training to share the latest information about student surveys and peer observation. STFs used this PPT to disseminate information to teachers at their in-person meetings. Some of the teachers who attended the focus groups were from pilot districts and were familiar with PGES; however, some teachers had no knowledge of PGES at all. Because of this variance in knowledge, the focus groups were designed with a two-fold purpose:

1. To share basic information about student surveys and peer observation; and
2. To gather teacher feedback and suggestions for improved implementation. STFs all used the same presentation in their meetings (see presentation used in APPENDIX A).

HSG transcribed the data collected from the email responses after those responses were forwarded to HSG staff by the STFs. The focus groups required HSG to transcribe comments from the reports provided to them by the STFs who facilitated each of the focus groups (report template can be found in APPENDIX B).

HSG staff manually coded the data based on themes and topics that emerged from the data analysis. Coding was done by two HSG staff members to better ensure the validity of the data. In future qualitative data collections, HSG expects to receive a larger volume of data. Larger data sets will require HSG to use a computer program to categorize and analyze the data.

The focus groups allowed STFs to collect data that indicate that the participating teachers were concerned about the following issues related to peer observations and student surveys:

Table 8: Peer Observation Challenges (focus groups)

Challenges Identified by Teachers	Number of Teachers
Time it requires to do.	9
How the peer observers are selected.	8
The criteria the observers use during the observation.	1
Peer observer training.	3
Lack of information about peer observations.	2
The peer observer's content expertise.	1
The lack of a culture of feedback in the school.	4
The fidelity to the rubric used in the observation.	1
Bias on the part of the peer observer.	1
Duration and frequency of the peer observations.	2
The resources required to do peer observations.	1
Documentation of the results of the peer observation.	1

Table 9: Student Survey Challenges (focus groups)

Challenges Identified by Teachers	Number of Teachers
Negative bias on the part of the student.	9
Concerns about how the data from the survey are used.	3
Frequency of survey administration.	5
Surveys are developmentally inappropriate.	4
Lack of information for teachers.	2
Too many choices on the survey.	2
Concern about the selection of which class or students respond to the survey.	7
Students' perspectives are limited.	1
There are too many questions on the survey.	1

The data collected in the focus groups allow STFs to ask teachers in attendance to generate possible solutions to the challenges identified with (in this case) peer observations and student surveys. The solutions listed below were taken directly from the reports submitted by STFs.

List 1: Peer Observation Potential Solutions (focus groups)
1. **Kentucky Department of Education needs to provide more information about the qualifications for peer observers (mentioned three times by teachers).**
2. **Either have all teachers be peer observers or have elections like SBDM elections (mentioned two times by teachers).**
3. **Use two observers to ensure consistency (mentioned two times by teachers).**
4. Peer observers should be high-quality classroom teachers.
5. Use voice recorders to allow peer observers to be trained uniformly.
6. Increase the dialogue about instruction in schools.

7. Reduce some less crucial professional development to incorporate time for peer training; possibly make this part of the state regulations so districts/administrators cannot circumvent the system.
8. School and administrators develop schedule.
9. Need a better definition of "peer."
10. Focus on reflection.
11. Have content and grade level specific observers.
12. Provide stipends for observers.
13. Train observers over the summer.
14. Make observers part-time with part-time teaching responsibilities.
15. Make the process evidence-based.
16. Important to build trust and have partners.
17. Training of peer observers is key.
18. Address the fears of classroom teachers that the observer will not have a proper understanding of the cultural fears and concerns of the context of the students in the classroom.
19. Provide subs for observers.
20. Provide meaningful professional development for the observer and the observed.
21. Delete some sort of duty time where less teacher supervision may be required so that teachers may work on observation tasks.
22. Do more cross-curricular training and team teaching.

*NOTE: The three solutions in **BOLD print** represent those mentioned by teachers more than once.*

List 2: Student Survey Potential Solutions (focus groups)
1. **Multiple survey dates allowing teachers to adapt to the findings of the survey (mentioned six times by teachers).**
2. **Student surveys small piece of evaluation if any (mentioned three times by teachers).**
3. **Should only be used as one measure among many to evaluate a teacher (mentioned only once but is consistent with the pattern evident in #2, that the surveys play a minimal role in a teacher's overall evaluation rating).**
4. **Shorten the survey and change the wording to some of the questions (mentioned only once but is consistent with the solutions posed in #5 and #6 about the construction of the survey instrument and the need to possibly modify it for younger students).**
5. **Less questions for elementary students.**
6. **Reduce answer choices to four.**
7. Parent surveys for students who can't complete (lower grades, special education).
8. Student-led discussion groups about what each question on the survey means and vignettes to show a teacher lesson and possible student feedback using language of survey.
9. Teachers "assessed" on how they change teaching because of surveys rather than surveys themselves.
10. Allow teacher variety.
11. **All students take the survey (this potential solution is contradicted by the solution offered in #12).**

12. **Teachers choose the class period for surveying.**
13. **Consistent language for all level of surveys (this potential solution is contradicted by the solution offered in #14).**
14. **Specific language changes to survey.**
15. Guidelines for administering survey.
16. Interview format versus paper surveys.
17. Teachers are unsure as to how the survey results are going to be used thus we don't know exactly how to gain the intended insight of students.

*NOTE: The three solutions in **BOLD print** represent those mentioned by teachers more than once OR are in contradiction to another proposed solution.*

Table 10: Data collected from email responses

Question	Should be used to change the learning environment	Used as a tool, but not as part of the evaluation	Should be used little to not at all as part of the evaluation	Should play a small to medium part of the evaluation	Should play a medium to large part of the evaluation
What role should student voice play in creating a positive learning environment?	8	3	7	9	2

Table 11

Question	Environ-ment	Instructional Strategies	Reflection to Improve Practice	Identify Common Themes	Students can feel safe to share info.	Frequency of Student Survey Administration	Assess Student Knowledge	Help individualize instruction to student preferences
How can you use student surveys to inform your instruction?	8	39	22	7	6	4	5	38

Table 12

Question	Developmental Appropriateness	Inability to be Objective/Honest	Don't Trust the Results	Students Fear Lack of Privacy	Students lack Seriousness and Perspective	Time to Administer the Survey	Generic responses will not be Helpful	Frequency of survey administration and Timing of administration	Length and Survey Design
What challenges do you see with using student surveys?	26	41	8	1	27	5	3	3	6

Table 13

Question	Profess-ional	Respectful	High-quality teacher	Fair	Well-trained	Honest	Unbiased	Content Expert	Provides Constructive Feedback	Positive	Non-evaluative	Good Listener
What characteristics do you expect from a peer observer?	21	5	14	6	6	19	29	21	30	7	4	1

Table 14

Question	Training	Oversight by a Committee	More than 1 observation	In-person debrief/reflection	Not included in evaluation	Constructive Feedback	Small group observers with anonymous feedback
What methods should be used for peer observers to promote real reflection for growth and yet remain non-evaluative?	2	19	2	10	8	8	1

Table 14 Continued

Question (continued from table above)	Share Reflection Only After Obser-vation	Objective Feedback	Teacher Selects Observers	Video	Observation used for Professional Development for Observer	Positive Relationship with Observer	Use it as an Opportunity to Share Ideas
What methods should be used for peer observers to promote real reflection for growth and yet remain non-evaluative?	7	6	3	4	4	2	3

Table 15

Question	Time	Lack of trust of the observer	Honesty of Observer	Commitment of Observer	Ability to provide Subjective Feedback	Having content knowledge	Observer is properly trained	Observers with limited time to spend in classrooms	Open-minded observers
What challenges to you see with peer observations?	44	36	9	10	18	25	12	3	2

Table 16

Question	Awareness of Performance	Feedback is rooted in research-proven best practices	Is tied to coaching resources	Feedback will help improve student results	Feedback provides me with a new strategy or resource
How can you use feedback from peer observations to improve your practice?	2	8	2	2	20

Table 16 Continued

Question (continued from table above)	Provides me with an opportunity to reflect on my practice	Provides me with help on modifying lessons and improving instruction	Any feedback is helpful	Provides an accurate picture of my classroom from an outside observer	Gives me an opportunity to collaborate with a peer
How can you use feedback from peer observations to improve your practice?	9	18	9	12	11

Discussion of Data

Peer Observations

There were a number of themes that emerged from both the qualitative and quantitative data collections. Teachers were generally supportive of the use of peer observers and student surveys yet they reported concerns with both. For example, 87.5 percent of teachers agreed (see Table 1) that peer observation could be a powerful professional experience; however, teachers expressed concern about the time peer observations require and how it would impact the school day (see Tables 1, 8, and 15). There were also concerns about training for observers and how they would be selected (see Tables 1 and 8). Respondents felt that feedback from peers might be more valuable than the feedback they receive from an administrator (see Table 1). Respondents reported that they felt that more than one peer should observe them and two observations during the school year would be most beneficial (see Table 2 and List 1). There were additional concerns about the content expertise of a peer observer (Tables 8 and 15). Respondents were confident that their peers would provide them with specific and meaningful feedback and their effectiveness would be the focus of the observation (see Tables 1 and 3). They also felt that peer observation builds collaboration among teachers and is an opportunity for teachers to take on leadership roles within the school (see Table 1).

The qualitative data indicated that it is important for teachers to trust their peer observer (see Table 15). The qualitative data indicate that teachers would like their peer observers to: provide them with feedback that points them to a new strategy or resource, provides them with help modifying lessons and improving instruction, and provides them with an accurate picture of their classroom (see Table 16).

Student Surveys

Given that the data indicate that fewer than half of the teachers surveyed have seen an actual student survey instrument (see Table 5), inferences from the discussion of these results should be limited. Overall, teachers think it is important to listen to what students have to say about their learning environment (see Table 4). In fact, 74.1 percent of respondents indicate that listening to what students say is a regular practice in their school (see Table 4). There appears to be consensus among the respondents that students, teachers, and school leaders are all equal partners in efforts to improve education (see Table 4). A majority of respondents (see Table 5) have used some form of a student survey in their classroom and have used the data from the surveys to refine instruction (see Tables 6 and 11). Qualitative data indicate that teachers thought the surveys could be used to individualize students' instruction (see Table 11). There is concern about how the data from student surveys will be used (see Table 9) and a majority of respondents agree that using such data for formative purposes would be helpful (see Table 4). A majority of teachers (see Table 10) thought that the student survey results should *not* be used or *used with limits* in determining a teacher's evaluation rating. There is also some concern about how honest students will be when responding to items on a survey (see Tables 4 and 12) and that students will base their responses on teacher likability as opposed to other more subjective factors (see Tables 7 and 9).

The qualitative feedback uncovered other concerns among respondents regarding the selection of student respondents (see Table 9 and List 2), the frequency of the survey administration (see Table 9 and List 2), and the developmental appropriateness of the instrument generally and in elementary grades specifically (see Tables 9, 12, and List 2).

Recommendations Based on Teacher Input

As mentioned previously, the focus groups gave STFs the opportunity to engage teachers in discussions about possible solutions to many of the challenges and concerns the data indicate are evident among respondents. The full lists of possible solutions are found in Lists 1 and 2 of this report; however, there are several that are noteworthy largely because they were mentioned most frequently.

1. More information from KDE was needed to clarify the qualifications of a peer observer;
2. Based on peer observation as it is defined now, teachers would prefer at least two peer observers observe each teacher (the survey data listed in Table 2 support this recommendation as well);
3. Teachers suggested that all teachers serve as peer observers;
4. Teachers suggested the need to administer student surveys more than one time a year in order to learn about and incorporate student feedback into their practice. Further, they indicated a need to provide the data from the surveys quickly to help teachers make instructional changes based on the data throughout the school year; and
5. Teachers mentioned wanting to limit use of student surveys or the need to use multiple measures in PGES, one of which is student survey results in determining a teacher's evaluation rating;

It should be noted that when documenting teacher-generated solutions to the challenges associated with student survey administration there were several solutions that were contradictory (see List 2). HSG issues caution with drawing inferences from the data collected from teachers in the survey administration, the focus groups, and the email responses regarding student surveys as it appears, (and there are data to support, see Table 5) that the majority of respondents have not seen an example of a student survey instrument. It is possible that seeing an example or reviewing a draft of the instrument Kentucky intends to use would impact the impressions of teachers about the instrument, the use of it as part of the evaluation process, and its overall usefulness for formative purposes.

Based on teacher-generated solutions and common themes heard from teachers around the state, HSG makes the following recommendations:

1. **Provide more information about student survey instruments to teachers.** For example, teachers wanted more information about the frequency of administration, which students will be included, how students are selected to complete the survey, the use of survey results for formative and summative purposes, and how student surveys will be administered (if at all) to younger, elementary age students. It might also be useful to allow teachers to see the student survey instrument that will be used as well as details about the inclusion of elementary-aged students in survey administrations. The MET project offers a website that includes a variety of resources on the use of student surveys (specifically the Tripod Survey) that could be useful in this regard, see: http://www.metproject.org/resources.php.

2. Teachers felt strongly that student survey results could be used to help them individualize student instruction (see Table 11), therefore, HSG recommends that the Kentucky Department of Education **provide or identify and recommend professional development to teachers to help them use the survey data to individualize student instruction and modify their instructional practices based on the data generated from student surveys**. Some teachers indicated that they had used student surveys in the past (see Tables 5 and 6), it might be helpful to have teachers who have used student surveys recount their experiences with using them and discuss how they

have used them to improve their instructional practice. See: http://www.metproject.org/downloads/StudentSurveyTeacherQandA.pdf as an example of a document that might of use to Kentucky teachers or an example of a document that could be modified to highlight a teacher or teachers from Kentucky who have used student surveys.

3. **Provide information to teachers about how peer observers will be selected, what are the qualifications of a peer observer, how they will be trained, and what their role will be in the evaluative process.** For example, will their observations be used for formative or summative purposes or both, how many times and how many different peer observers will observe a teacher, and what a teacher can expect relative to feedback from a peer observer). Denver Public Schools has several website pages dedicated to peer observers, their role, how they are selected and how they serve as a resource to teachers, see: http://leap.dpsk12.org/LEAP-Components/ObservationModel/Peer-Observation.

4. **Teachers mentioned that observers should be the most effective teachers** (see Table 13 and List 1) therefore, Kentucky should consider how teacher effectiveness data can be used to identify possible peer observers when multiple years of such data are available. As preliminary as any data from PGES is going to be for several years and as that data has not yet been validated, KEA would suggest this recommendation is premature. Kentucky should provide models and examples for how school districts **might support differentiated pay for teachers in leadership roles, like peer observers**.

5. Across the state, teachers had a difficult time understanding why they would give up class time in order to script another teacher's performance when video recording could produce the same result. Teachers recommended **making the observation part of professional learning for the *observer* rather than the *observed***, in order to take valuable teaching techniques back to the their classrooms. **Kentucky should consider how PGES data can be used to pair peers with observers for the purpose of supporting both teachers' practice when multiple years of such data are available.**

Data Collection Challenges Being Addressed

One of the challenges associated with data collection is centered on the total number of teachers in all 21 PLN. At this time, as expected, the number of teachers in a PLN is lower than HSG would prefer. Higher numbers of teachers in PLN means that conclusions drawn from both the qualitative and quantitative data are more generalizable. Given the PLN are in their infancy of development, their small size is expected; however, there is an expectation that their size grows over the next couple of months. To address the need to support STFs in their efforts to increase the size of PLN, HSG will look to strategically move from asking teachers to come to focus groups to a model where STFs actively seek out and attend meetings where teachers are already gathered (for example, attending faculty meetings).

When using Survey Monkey to respond to surveys, some teachers did not answer every question. Incomplete surveys compromise the utility of the data set derived from that particular survey; therefore, HSG has altered the format of the surveys to require respondents to answer each

question before advancing to the subsequent question.

There is also some concern that each survey completed does not represent a distinct, unique respondent. The inability to ensure that a teacher could not respond to the same survey more than once is also problematic as HSG would like to be able to accurately report the number of teachers taking surveys and reassure KDE and its partners that survey data are accurate and do not include duplicate responses. To address this issue in the short term, an analysis was run on the survey data to identify survey responses that originated from the same computer. While our analysis revealed that some surveys were completed on the same computer, additional analysis indicated that the survey responses varied, an indication that the surveys were completed by different individuals most likely in the same school, using the same computer.

In the long-term, HSG will require survey respondents to provide verifiable personal information when they begin to take a survey. While this requirement will mean that anonymity is no longer possible, HSG and ETS believe this is a necessary step to ensure data integrity. Similar to the TELL survey protocol, teachers will be told that their identifiable information will be removed before reporting or analyzing the data to reassure them that their willingness to candidly share their opinions is valued and that they should not be concerned about their responses being traced back to them.

Next Steps

HSG has secured the services of a firm to externally evaluate the STF program in Kentucky. Policy Studies Associates will begin working with HSG, STFs, and the partners in Kentucky in February. Their evaluation is designed to help HSG make programmatic changes to the STFs model for future deployments of the program in other states. The evaluation will focus on the following:

1. Quality of data collected by STFs;
2. The general impressions of the program among STFs, the SEA, and other state-based partners;
3. The development and operation of PLN; and
4. The use of STFs/PLN-generated data by the SEA.

In addition, HSG is planning to work with an outside partner to help with qualitative data analysis as well as more detailed training for STFs on best practices for data collection and tracking. HSG will continue to use the three primary data collection tools: surveys, in-person meetings, and online discussions to gather teacher voice from across the state.
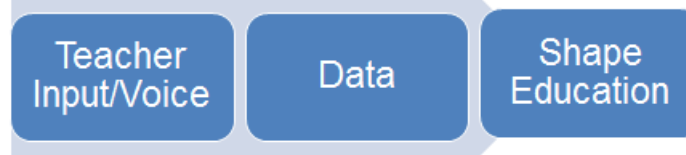
APPENDIX A

Who is Hope Street Group?

- National
- Nonpartisan
- Nonprofit
- Rooted in the belief that <u>people</u> make change
- 21 Teacher Fellows in Kentucky

hope street group

Why is Hope Street Group in Kentucky?

Teacher Input/Voice → Data → Shape Education

Teachers are directly impacted by education policies and without their input and support policies will not be effective

hope street group

Hope Street Group Partners in Kentucky

Kentucky Department of Education → Kentucky Education Association → Prichard Committee
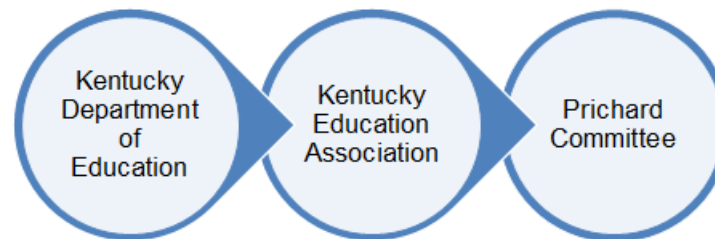
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What is Hope Street Group doing?

- Exposing teachers to state policy, specifically PGES

- Merging new knowledge with experience

- Building teacher leaders who gather teacher input

- Sharing teacher voice data with decision makers

hope street group

Why Peer Observation?

- Opportunity for another teacher to provide feedback
- Gain new ideas and perspectives
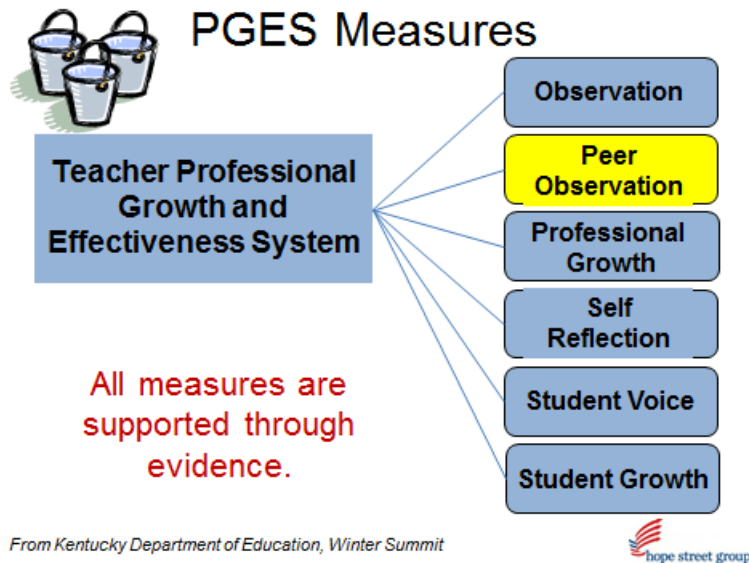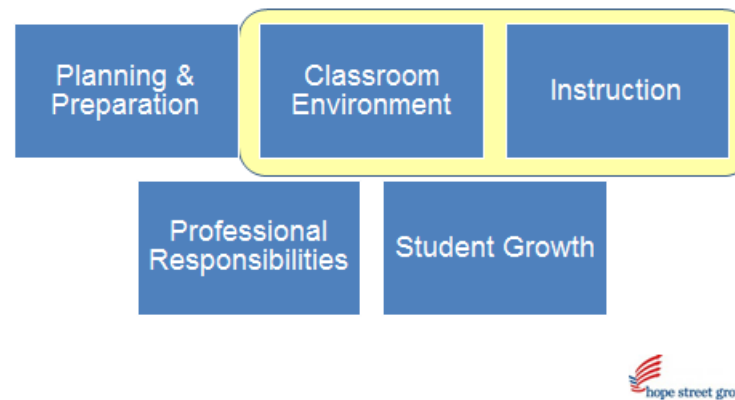- Potentially helps both participants (the observer and the one being observed)

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Trained observers

Focused discussions

Multiple observers

More frequent observations

Increased reflection

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Why Peer Observation?

Data show that peer observation assists with continuous improvement.

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PGES Measures

Teacher Professional Growth and Effectiveness System

- Observation
- Peer Observation
- Professional Growth
- Self Reflection
- Student Voice
- Student Growth

All measures are supported through evidence.

From Kentucky Department of Education, Winter Summit

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Peer Observation and Kentucky's Framework for Teaching

Planning & Preparation	Classroom Environment	Instruction

Professional Responsibilities	Student Growth

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Peer Observation Process Overview

All of the activities with peer observation are <u>reflective</u> conversations focused on <u>improvement</u>.

Pre-observation conference

Observation

Post-observation conference

Continuous Improvement

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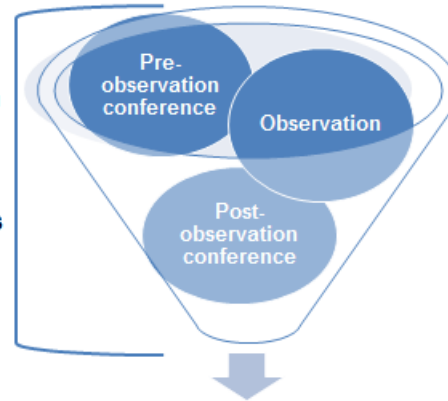
Feedback is based on EVIDENCE

Artifacts

Statements

Actions

- Posted
- Used

- Teacher
- Students

- Teacher
- Students
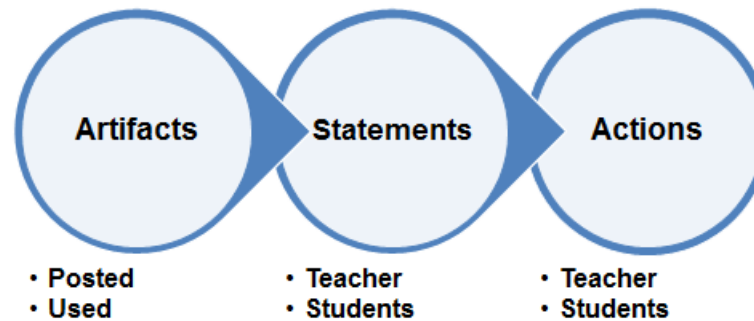
Adapted from KDE-
An Overview of the Proposed Multiple Measures of Observation and Peer Observation

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Peer Observation

Does **NOT** include judgment statements based on interpretation and bias.

Distinguish Between Evidence, Interpretation, and Bias

Examine each statement and determine if the statement is:
- Evidence
- Interpretation or
- Bias

PGES- Student Voice

Why, What, How

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The Student Voice Framework

Teachers Provide:

Support through rigorous instruction

Transparency through effective communication styles

Understanding through appropriate and varied assessments

Discipline through respectful classroom culture

Engagement through innovative instruction

Nurturing through attentive observation

Trust through teamwork

From: The Kentucky Department of Education
http://education.ky.gov/teachers/HiEffTeach/Pages/Student-Voice-Survey.aspx

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Why Student Surveys?

CONSISTENCY

Triangulate data- this is <u>one</u> of multiple measures that can help provide additional information beyond the other PGES components

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PGES Measures

Teacher Professional Growth and Effectiveness System

- Observation
- Peer Observation
- Professional Growth
- Self Reflection
- **Student Voice**
- Student Growth

All measures are supported through evidence.

From Kentucky Department of Education, Winter Summit

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Student Surveys

Kentucky's pilot PGES surveys are
modified from the Tripod Survey
(used in the MET project)

Advantage:
 Experience-
- 11 years
- 1,000s of classrooms

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Student Surveys

- 2 student voice surveys
  - 3rd-5th
  - 6th-12th
- Parents can opt out of their child completing a survey
- Individual student results are not reported

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Examining the Surveys

Select one of the levels (3rd-5th or 6th-12th) and complete the survey as if you were doing it for a teacher you have had in the past.

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Share YOUR Thoughts

Please respond to the following questions using your smart phone.

Note: Summary data and themes from the data (not your individual responses) will be shared with Kentucky partners

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Share YOUR Thoughts

I learned valuable information about Student Surveys at today's meeting

You may respond at **PollEv.com** when the presenter pushes this poll

Text a **CODE** to 22333

Strongly Agree	**709727**
Moderately Agree	**709728**
Agree	**709729**
Disagree	**709730**
Moderately Disagree	**709731**
Strongly Disagree	**709732**

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Share YOUR Thoughts

I learned valuable information about Peer Observations at today's meeting

You may respond at **PollEv.com** when the presenter pushes this poll

Text a **CODE** to 22333

Strongly Agree	**709733**
Moderately Agree	**709734**
Agree	**709735**
Disagree	**709736**
Moderately Disagree	**709737**
Strongly Disagree	**709738**

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Share YOUR Thoughts

After today's meeting, I feel more comfortable using Peer Observation as part of my practice

You may respond at **PollEv.com** when the presenter pushes this poll
Text a **CODE** to 22333

Strongly Agree	**709746**
Moderately Agree	**709747**
Agree	**709748**
Disagree	**709749**
Moderately Disagree	**709750**
Strongly Disagree	**709751**

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Share YOUR Thoughts

After today's meeting, I feel more comfortable using Student Surveys as part of my practice

You may respond at **PollEv.com** when the presenter pushes this poll
Text a **CODE** to 22333

Strongly Agree	**709739**
Moderately Agree	**709740**
Agree	**709741**
Disagree	**709742**
Moderately Disagree	**709744**
Strongly Disagree	**709745**

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Share YOUR Thoughts

How many people will you talk to about what you learned today?

You may respond at **PollEv.com** when the presenter pushes this poll

Text **709752** and your message to **22333**

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Continue the Discussion

- Log on the VEP
- Share about your challenges, concerns, and solutions
- Learn about more resources

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Next Steps…

- Tell others what you learned
- Stay involved with surveys
- Log in to the VEP to provide follow up about today's meeting and learn more about Peer Observation KET modules
- Attend our next convening

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Reminder:
How are the data utilized?

The different types of data (i.e. quantitative data from the surveys and qualitative data from the convenings and Virtual Engagement Platform) are reported to decision makers to create

BETTER EDUCATION POLICY

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APPENDIX B

Post Meeting After Action Report

Following your focus group on Peer Observation an Student Survey's we would like to collect some information for our report to policy makers. Each STF should complete the following report related to Peer Observation and Student Surveys.

Name:
Number of attendees:
1. Biggest challenges facing Peer Observation:
2. Proposed solution to biggest challenges facing Peer Observation:
3. Biggest challenges facing Student Surveys:
4. Proposed solution to biggest challenges facing Student Surveys:
5. Other concerns raised during my focus group:
6. Other proposed solutions developed during my focus group: